

Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy



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West Lindsey District Council's Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy defines our vision, aims and high-level ambition for the Council itself, as well as wider aspirations for the district that we think are achievable by working in partnership.

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Foreword

Our goal is to reduce the carbon emissions produced by the council to net zero and achieve the same position across the district by 2050 at the latest. This strategy and action plan are designed to achieve this.

A number of projects will sit underneath our strategy. These will be specifically geared to help us slow down and reverse our contribution to climate degradation, but also deliver outcomes that our residents and businesses tell us that we should be working towards.

It is clear that we have to act now, and we have tough international and national targets to achieve. But we think that by working together, the Council can exceed these targets and become a leading Green Council. This will deliver community benefits by safeguarding our natural environment and bringing economic growth and jobs.

Our strategy explains some of the climate science and why we need to change. It then sets out our aspirations for a greener, sustainable and thriving, low carbon West Lindsey for the next 10 years and beyond.

The environmental challenges that we face today are well known. Climate breakdown is happening before our eyes, and as traditional resources are becoming harder to obtain and the environmental impact of their extraction and unconstrained use more difficult to justify, it is clear that change is coming in the way we go about our lives. It will also affect the way our council operates.

However, with change comes opportunity and we are in a great position to act. We haven't declared a 'Climate Emergency' as some have, because we recognised what climate scientists were saying a long time ago. As a result, we embraced environmental policies and have a carbon management plan that is already delivering – not just

in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but real, cashable savings for our Council – and our residents. This means that we have committed political and managerial leadership that are on board and passionate about driving this agenda forward.

We are also fortunate that we have businesses and people living in our district who take the environment seriously. Climate change and protecting the environment are often seen as big issues that only world governments tackle. But we all have a part to play and it cannot be done in isolation. We will need to work together and take action.

During the development of the Strategy we have undertaken two phases of consultation. These have generated around 400 responses and the feedback we have received has been reflected upon and referenced within this document. There is a real sense that among our residents, businesses, parish and town councils, climate, sustainability and environmental matters are of real importance to them; they want the Council to take urgent action and are supportive of the aims of this Strategy.



Our Strategy

We examine 10 key topic areas in the strategy, but all are interlinked and taken together the outcomes of the strands are clear: reduced carbon emissions, improved quality of life, a protected natural environment, community and economic benefit.



The council has an ambition to be a Green Council and that means taking ownership of our own activities and actions. We also recognise that we have a role to play in facilitating and developing partnerships to create Green Communities and if we want a Green District and a supporting local economy, we need to use our leadership and influencing skills to achieve this.

However, it is clear that the achievement of the district wide target will be difficult without additional support from Government and effective collaboration with key partner organisations and stakeholders.



Ian Knowles
Chief Executive of West Lindsey
District Council



Cllr Tracey Coulson
Chair Person of the Environment
and Sustainability Working
Group

Our Framework

We have developed a robust framework with three key policy strands Green Council, Green Communities and Green Business, to support the delivery of our action plan. It supports our Corporate Plan for 2019-2023 which sets out the vision based around Our People, Our Place, Our Council.

“West Lindsey is a great place to be where people, businesses and communities can thrive and reach their potential.”

Specific reference is made within the Corporate Plan of the need to improve the quality of our **built environment**, whilst ensuring **our natural environment is preserved** for the benefit of both current and future residents and the Council promotes environmental sustainability and conducts its own business accordingly.

Emphasis is also placed on achieving sustainable growth as the key to the future prosperity of the district. However, it is recognised that we must work simultaneously to ensure our natural environment is protected and where development occurs, look to ensure that appropriate green space and recreational facilities are provided.

Strand: Green Council
Key Focus: Own activity/emissions
Example: Carbon Management Plan/Project delivery

Strand: Green Communities
Key Focus: Facilitation/Partnership
Example: Town/Parish Council initiatives

Strand: Green Business
Key Focus: Leadership influence
Example: Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership/
Economic Recovery Plan



Introduction

Global changes in the earth's average temperature have been rapidly increasing and is impacting on the planet's environments, which is everything natural around us, rivers, trees, plants and animals. Human activities such as the way we dispose of waste, burn oil, coal and gas, deforestation and population growth have led to this rise. Approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels is a result of human activities with a likely range of 0.8°C to 1.2°C. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.

The Paris Agreement

This is the first truly global effort to reduce emissions. To date, 160 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) parties have made voluntary pledges to reduce emissions up to 2030, including China, the US and the European Union (on behalf of the UK and other EU nations).

The main aim of the Paris Agreement is to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C, above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C. Overall, the current pledges would lead to lower global emissions compared to previous expectations. However, further action will be required to keep warming to below 2°C or 1.5°C.

Carbon Budgets

A carbon budget is the cumulative amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions permitted over a period of time to keep within a certain temperature threshold. In the context of the Paris Agreement, calculations have been made to determine what level of additional CO₂ emissions could be produced before global temperatures exceed 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Keeping within the

budget figure should enable climate change to be tolerable. Budget calculations have been produced on a global, international, national, regional and local authority scale.

National Context

The UK Climate Change Act commits the UK Government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. To ensure significant early progress is made towards achieving this target, in December 2020, the Government announced an ambitious target to cut emissions by 68% by 2030 based on those same 1990 levels. This was amended in April 2021 to 78% by 2035.

Furthermore, to strengthen the UK's commitment to achieving a net zero carbon position by 2050, the Government has set out an ambitious ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution. The plan covers clean energy, transport, nature and innovative technologies, mobilising £12bn of government investment to create and support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs in the UK.

The Government's 25 year Environment Plan sets out the action it will take to deliver cleaner air and water and to protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats.

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment has identified six priority risk areas:

1. Flooding
2. High temperatures
3. Water supply shortages
4. Natural capital
5. Food production
6. Pests and diseases.

The Environment Bill

This puts into legislation a series of environmental principles and establishes an Office for Environmental Protection, which will have scrutiny, advice and enforcement functions. It also makes provision for the setting of long-term, legally binding environmental targets in four priority areas:

1. Air Quality
2. Water
3. Biodiversity
4. Resource Efficiency and Waste Reduction

This is along with the production of statutory Environmental Improvement Plans as part of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

Future Homes Standard

Homes are a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) reports that they were responsible for 14% of the UK's total emissions in 2018. Unlike other sectors such as business, transport and energy supply, residential homes saw emission levels rise between 2017 and 2018. Additionally, the CCC suggest that efforts to adapt the UK's housing stock to the impacts of the changing climate: for higher average temperatures, flooding and water scarcity, are also lagging far behind what is needed to keep us safe and comfortable, even as these climate change risks grow.

- Around 4.5 million homes overheat, even in cool summers
- Average UK water consumption is higher than in many other European countries.

- 1.8 million people live in areas at significant risk of flooding
- Cost-effective measures to adapt the UK housing stock are not being rolled-out at anywhere near the required level. The UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) calculates that 40% of the UK's total emissions are derived from the whole built environment.

The Government is planning to introduce a new Future Homes Standard by 2025, helping us towards that net zero goal. Homes being built now will still be there in 2050 so getting them built right and to high environmental standards is a crucial part of meeting the targets.

Green Homes Grant

There have been a number of Government backed schemes designed to encourage home owners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. This £2bn initiative is aimed at giving over 600,000 homeowners in England up to £10,000 to install insulation, heat pumps, draught proofing and more to help households cut energy bills and improve energy efficiency. The jobs created by such a scheme are also designed to form part of an overarching 'Green Recovery' from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Commentators however are querying the effectiveness of this initiative. Uptake has been not as expected and delays in works being commenced and completed have been experienced by householders.

Climate Assembly

The first UK-wide citizens' assembly on climate change, was commissioned by six House of Commons Select Committees. It has published its final report on how the UK can reach its legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050. The work was commissioned to

understand public preferences on how the UK should tackle climate change because of the impact these decisions will have on peoples' lives. The Climate Assembly UK's report, The Path to Net Zero, detailed recommendations across ten areas on how we can meet our target. This includes: how we travel; what we eat and how we use the land; what we buy; heat and energy use in the home; how we generate our electricity; and greenhouse gas removals. Each chapter details assembly members' views on the advantages and disadvantages, including the trade-offs and co-benefits of different ways of reaching net zero.

It also includes recommendations on Covid-19 recovery and the path to net zero. In total, the report contains over 50 recommendations for policy measures designed to meet the net zero target by 2050. The report also conveys assembly members' agreement on themes that recurred throughout their discussions, on the need for:

- Improved information and education for all on climate change
- Fairness, including across sectors, geographies, incomes and health
- Freedom and choice for individuals and local areas
- Strong leadership from government

It also stresses the assembly's support for protecting and restoring nature, and the value of 'co-benefits' to tackling climate change, such as improved health, advantages for local communities, high streets and the economy, including by the promotion of innovation in technology. It calls on policy makers to make use of the report as an "invaluable resource" for decision making.



Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Across Lincolnshire, the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) is working in a collaborative nature with public and private sector bodies to position the region in an advantageous position to attract inward and external investment. The Local Industrial Strategy and embedded Economic Recovery Strategy are in place for all partners to deliver against. However, the GLLEP is conscious that growth must be sustainable and also complement the climate and carbon reduction agendas. Hence, the creation of a low carbon economy across the region is a key priority sector to support growth in offshore wind as well as in the development of other low carbon goods and services.

The agri-food sector is another priority to ensure that agriculture and associated, research, manufacturing and logistics take account of climate change to ensure sustainability in production and adaptation in the event of the worst effects of climate change. Water management is also a concern of the GLLEP as it recognises the need for reliable water supplies to support growth, bio-diversity and also the need to mitigate against the worst effects of flooding and coastal erosion.

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) aims to prepare plans and policies that help create places that are sustainable and attractive to live in. The Local Plan should work together with other plans and policies, such as economic, housing and environmental strategies. The delivery of new homes and jobs for Central Lincolnshire up to 2036, will be provided for through a new single Local Plan.

The CLLP for the period 2012 to 2036 has been adopted but is

currently the subject of review to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Part of the review is to investigate the role of the CLLP in addressing climate change and to investigate whether a carbon neutral plan can be delivered. To this extent consultancy support has been sourced to bring together existing evidence on climate change and carbon emissions that is widely recognised and endorsed as being robust, and developing bespoke evidence for the Central Lincolnshire area, to build up a clear and robust picture of the carbon implications arising from the Local Plan, and thereby delivering options for how the plan might reduce or negate this to deliver a carbon neutral plan.



Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire District Councils

Across Lincolnshire all councils are acting to address climate change, enhance the environment and promote sustainability. Considerations are underway with regard to the best means of collating and combining efforts to ensure that the councils as a whole work in partnership and lead the engagement with the wider community around the county on climate change issues. Efforts have to be

particularly concentrated on the business community to assist in delivering a community wide low carbon economy that meets the local and national targets of achieving a net zero carbon emissions by 2050. A Lincolnshire Sustainability Officers Group has already been established to facilitate cross-learning and collaboration and this will be developed further to support the wider concept of partnership working.

Neighbourhood Plans

At a local level the council fully supports and endorses the concept of Neighbourhood Plans. At the time of writing 15 have been 'made' with 28 at various stages of development. This work is important so that communities and parishes take an active part in influencing development in their local area and identify local solutions to local problems. It is a key role for the council to ensure that at a local level, climate, sustainability and environmental concerns are reflected in Neighbourhood Plans. It is evident that for international, national and local climate related targets to be achieved, all must play their part by identifying supporting initiatives and implementing changes to current practises or behaviours.

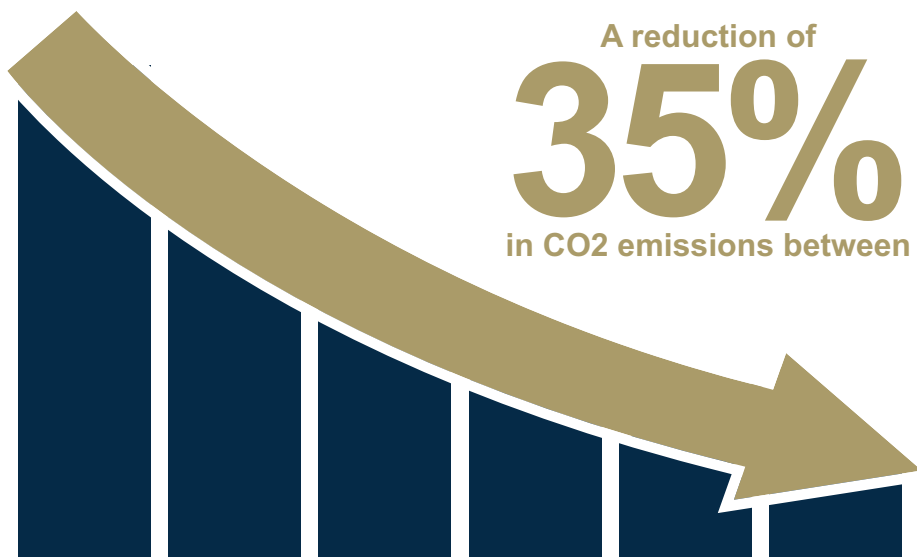
Parish/Town Councils

Engagement at a grass-roots level is vital to ensure that a collaborative approach is adopted in the efforts to tackle climate change. Across the district there is great enthusiasm and interest among parish and town councils to enhance the natural environment of their local communities and in some instances they are devising their own local strategies. Building on this interest, joining communities together and facilitating the sharing of information will be a key role for the Council.



Carbon Management

The council has been taking action to reduce the impact of its operations on the environment for a number of years and has worked through two Carbon Management Plans (CMP). From an initial baseline of 2036 tCO₂e, over the lifetime of the two CMPs, emissions have reduced by 711 tonnes.



Work undertaken to reduce the footprint includes the introduction of LED lighting in council buildings, replacement of ICT equipment and infrastructure with lower energy using alternatives, a greater adoption of flexible and remote working facilitated by tele-conferencing, a move to paper-light meetings, introduction of more energy efficient and less polluting waste fleet vehicles and the addition of solar panels to a number of council buildings.

Since the inception of the last CMP, the council has acquired and built additional assets that have added to its carbon footprint. These include Lea Fields Crematorium, Market Rasen Leisure Centre and the new Waste Depot.

Whilst built to high energy efficiency standards (and in the case of the new Waste Depot incorporating solar and battery storage capabilities), it is important that the impact of these assets on the council's emissions is evaluated. Hence, to arrive at a new baseline and to identify a road map of projects to reduce emissions to net zero, the council has engaged the Carbon Trust to assist in the development of the next Carbon Management Plan, which will run for the period 2021-2026. This work has completed and has provided the council with a revised carbon footprint of 3429 tCO₂e. This demonstrates that carbon emissions are fluid in nature and can change over time.

Having this new baseline has identified a number of actions (short, medium and longer-term) that the council should consider to continue its carbon reduction journey. These actions have been incorporated into the action plan that supports this Strategy.

District Data

The table (right) illustrates the level of carbon emissions that are emitted across the whole of the district by sector, as calculated by the Office for National Statistics (2018).

This demonstrates the scale of the challenge to achieve a district wide net-zero carbon position. It is evident that the council's impact on the district as a whole is minimal when compared to the total of 524kt of CO₂e emitted across the district. This means that on average each person living in the district is responsible for approximately 5.4 tCO₂e. That is equivalent to the weight of an African elephant. However, it is vitally important that as a leader of place, the council takes positive steps to reduce its own emissions whilst also supporting and encouraging residents and businesses across the district to do the same.

District Wide Emissions

Sector Name	CO2 (kt)
Industry & Commercial Electricity	51
Industry & Commercial Gas	35
Large Industrial Installations	0
Industrial & Commercial Other Fuels	33
Agricultural Combustion	29
Domestic Electricity	38
Domestic Gas	83
Domestic Other Fuels	32
Road Transport (A roads)	148
Road Transport (Motorways)	0
Road Transport (Minor roads)	66
Diesel Railways	7
Transport Other	5
Land Use, Land Use Change & Forestry (LULUCF) Net Emissions	-4
Total for all sectors	524

Research by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change has provided a means of calculating carbon budgets on an international, national, regional and local scale. Their research has calculated that the district of West Lindsey's share of the remaining global carbon budget is 3.2Mt CO₂. Therefore, at current emission rates it would be entirely consumed within seven years (by 2028). To stay within its carbon budget, the district should reduce emissions by 13.7% every year, or by 50% every five years. Urgent action is therefore required to 'turn the curve' and drastically reduce emissions as quickly as possible.



Decision Making

For the Council to achieve its environment and sustainability related ambitions, it is imperative that such matters are at the forefront of the Council's decision making. Decision makers should be presented with accurate, reliable and up to date information and be sufficiently knowledgeable to effectively scrutinise the information to achieve the best outcomes.

Competing and conflicting needs concerning climate related matters may be simultaneously in play and therefore must be weighed against each other. For example, green spaces not only mitigate heat, but also provide biodiversity, recreational and wellbeing benefits.

However, at the same time the need for more green spaces competes with the need for more housing or commercial space across the district. In such respects environmental and sustainability concerns link to other political agendas, on local, regional, national and international bases. This underscores the need for decision makers to consider issues well beyond the climate change agenda.



There are a number of actions the council can take to ensure that climate concerns are at the heart of decision-making

Corporate Priority

To ensure that due consideration is paid to the environment and sustainability across all council activity it is important that all key plans, policies and guidance are aligned to reflect the council's intentions to reduce carbon emissions and promote bio-diversity.

The Corporate Plan (2019-2023) presents a key challenge for the council to improve the quality of our built environment, whilst ensuring our natural environment is preserved for the benefit of both current and future residents and the council promotes environmental sustainability and conducts its own business accordingly. The plan therefore sets out a strategic aim to create a safer, cleaner district in which to live, work and socialise.

Actions to achieve this (including the implementation of this Strategy) will be drawn up through the council's annual business planning process with agreed initiatives to take forward referenced within the annual Executive Business Plan. This sets out key activity to progress each year in support of the priorities contained within the Corporate Plan with the financial implications contained within the council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). By ensuring that the decisions developed within these key strategic documents pay due reference to the climate change agenda, will demonstrate that this focus and emphasis runs throughout the council.

Reporting

The council must ensure all reports requiring a decision clearly set out the climate related issues, benefits, opportunities, risks and

associated costs. Sufficient attention must be paid to climate, environment and sustainability related aspects within policy or project development which can clearly set out the impacts/benefits of alternative options.

Training

The climate agenda is complex and technical and additional training to increase awareness for Councillors and officers will be required. Carbon literacy training, for example, would provide a sound basis from which further knowledge could be developed. The appointment of specialist officers or training existing officers in this area of expertise and drawing upon expert advice at the appropriate time(s) during the implementation stage of the strategy or project development must be considered. This would evidence that the Council has drawn upon and adopted best practice.

Governance

The appointment of a lead Councillor to act as a champion/figurehead for the council, for climate change across the district and region and to promote, lobby and encourage other stakeholders to follow suit is a key step. The council has appointed a Member Champion for Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment and a working group has also been formed, comprising Councillors and officers. Consideration must also be paid to the formation of a Board comprising of representatives from different sectors across the district to identify mutually beneficial initiatives, oversee the delivery of projects and track progress towards carbon reduction targets. The Council has a key influencing and leadership role to play in this regard.

Data

The use of accurate data is a key concept to aid effective decision making. Hence a reset of the baseline of the council's emissions was required to inform the next version of the council's CMP which will cover the period 2021-2026. This will significantly challenge the council to further reduce its carbon footprint. Previous plans have not generally received the focus and publicity that they might otherwise have benefitted from, therefore ensuring the tracking and reporting of progress in a transparent manner will demonstrate key accountability for this work. Collaboration across Lincolnshire and perhaps further afield may be required to ensure that the CMP (2021-2026) marries with and complements wider macro concerns.

Consultation and Engagement

Decision-making relating to the environment and sustainability needs to be inclusive with the public and other key stakeholders kept abreast of developments and provided with opportunities to feed into policy development where appropriate. The council has a strong record of consultation and has recently refreshed its Consultation Strategy. It sets out the council's aim to support strong, active and inclusive communities who could influence and shape the district of West Lindsey, helping to create a more transparent and accountable council.

The council's Citizen's Panel comprising of over 1600 residents is used as a basis for consultation across a wide range of subject matter. The council is well versed in holding theme-based consultation events across the district to impart information, gauge opinion and receive feedback. The council is identifying and considering the adoption of alternative consultation methods which would complement those currently in place. All methods would be

effective vehicles to obtain opinions and feedback from the public on climate and environment related issues which would be fed into strategy and/or project development. This would also serve to demonstrate that the Council is acting in a transparent manner and is upholding the public interest.

Progress and Delivery

The impact(s) of some decisions may not be evidenced for a considerable time and may involve determined, contributory actions on the part of others. It is essential that the council identifies its own sphere of influence and sets out the actions and outcomes that lie within this. Mechanisms need to be established that enable all interested parties to ascertain whether the decisions made have been effective and are achieving their desired outcomes. It is key to set measurable interim and long-term goals and targets to track progress towards the council's ambition of achieving a net-zero carbon position across its activities by 2050, in line with the UK Government's target. The monitoring and reporting of progress is essential to determine whether the decisions made are realising their intended outcomes and to also retain the trust and confidence of the public and stakeholders alike in the council's plans and to demonstrate that the council is taking a lead, example setting role. Importantly, where progress is identified as not being as intended, swift corrective decisions and actions will be required, following the decision-making principles set out above.

Procurement

As a major procurer of goods and services, the choices the council makes in respect of its procurement decisions can have a major impact on climate and environmental related matters.

The awarding of contracts for goods and services goes through an evaluation process with different weightings applied to aspects such as price and quality, and the introduction of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 also compels the council to consider the way in which what is to be procured may improve social, environmental and economic well-being.

To ensure that the correct level of emphasis is placed on the climate agenda during the assessment of bids for contracts, the council will have to consider whether the current weighting it applies to environmental related matters is adequate. Procurement Lincolnshire are currently writing guidance for partner councils to review and we await further information and advice in this regard.



Land Use and Green Space

West Lindsey is defined by its unique natural environment that so many people enjoy living and working within and visiting. The district's wide open landscapes and rich farmlands not only create jobs through agriculture and associated businesses, but they define a way of life and help our residents to experience nature and live healthy lives, consuming local produce in a place that particularly engenders a sense of belonging. The Lincolnshire Wolds, which provide valuable and natural environment capital, run through the district and contain an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which we strive to preserve for our existing and future residents, yet also promote to attract new residents and visitors.

To make the most of these natural resources and preserve and enhance them for future generations, we need to work in partnership. The council has a leadership role not only in improving its own performance in carbon reduction and provision of natural and green spaces, but also in pushing forward and inspiring businesses and communities to reach their full potential.

As part of this leadership role, it is important that we also consider what the possibilities of a low carbon society, with good provision of and access to its natural and historic environment will offer both to our people and the economy. Along with our obligations to reduce CO2 emissions, we must not lose focus on issues such as improving physical and mental health. Fortunately, all of these things can be encouraged through practical measures designed to achieve increased tree planting, biodiversity and creating a healthy living environment.

One issue with land use is that it can be a delicate balancing act with multiple competing priorities, but the flip side is that the possibilities are endless. Taken together though, the outcomes of our focus on green land use are very clear; higher levels of renewable energy

production, reduced carbon emissions, improved quality of life, a protected natural environment, community and economic benefits.

It will be impossible to fully deliver on these outcomes by ourselves. Our strategy aims to focus the work of the programme on bringing together the combined knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise of a wide range of partners who collectively can work with us to deliver on our aspirations.

We will work with our district council partners, Lincolnshire County Council, Parish/Town councils and land owners to consider land use schemes that work best at scale. This gives us greater lobbying power in the national arena and will allow us to utilise more effective planning processes so that, for instance new developments in West Lindsey incorporate proper provision for green spaces.

West Lindsey is already seen as a leader by many in areas such as green agriculture and agri-tech technologies that could place us not only at the heart of the regional picture but also nationally and internationally with huge economic benefits.

To ensure that the use of land across the district fully complements the climate and environment agendas, the Council must use its influence to ensure its aims are fully reflected in the CLLP and Lincolnshire County Council's newly emerging 'Green Masterplan' and their renewables and low carbon energy study. A main thrust of this strategy is that the council is open to business and we have tried to ensure that wider corporate leadership aspirations are captured in the programme and action plan.

We have identified a number of priority areas where we think we all need to do things differently in the future. They are areas where we have identified key short/medium term actions, showing how we will start to deliver the strategy happen.

The areas and their aims are as follows:

Biodiversity

Protect and enhance the diverse natural habitats of the district and the wildlife they support, making them more resilient to climate change, reversing biodiversity loss, and help create conditions for sustainable agriculture. Promote the use of open spaces as part of healthier and more active lifestyles.



Living Environment

Promote the use of open spaces as part of healthier and more active lifestyles. Improve the quality of the environment and our health by reducing air and noise pollution.

Built Environment

Develop high quality environments and green spaces in our towns and villages and protect and enhance the distinctive character of our landscapes. Show respect and care for the built heritage of West Lindsey.

Carbon Offsetting

Consider offsetting practices within the boundaries of the district (and possibly beyond) and this includes tree planting, woodland and parks management for example. This increases the capture of CO₂, in a process called sequestration and would allow us to offset emissions elsewhere in the district, helping to achieve our carbon neutral commitment. Whilst offsetting practices, which can be undertaken to help the council's carbon neutral ambition, will begin to be identified, offsetting will not be actively promoted above actions to reduce carbon emissions directly.

We are already making good progress in some areas but the vision is not something that will be fulfilled overnight. It will require partners to work together and show huge commitment and foresight to achieve it, but the stakes are too high for us to contemplate failure.

In 10 years' time we hope to see that ...

- There is a better quality environment which has made people healthier
- People are more aware of how important the environment is to our prosperity and where there are more 'low carbon' and environmental jobs
- We are more self-sufficient and use energy and our land resources better
- We are an important agricultural area that feeds the nation in the most carbon efficient environmentally friendly way possible
- The landscape and built and historic environment retains its unique character and has been protected and enhanced so that it benefits all – visitors, businesses and residents
- Areas of high nature conservation quality have been preserved and the loss of plant and animal species has been reversed
- We are firmly on track to becoming a 'low carbon' district and are more adaptive to climate change
- People have become 'greener' in the way they live their lives
- Local businesses are seen to have the most environmentally friendly land use practices and are leaders in green technologies
- The environment lies at the heart of other strategies and plans for the district and the county and where we have worked together better to implement them



Buildings

Buildings are currently responsible for more than 40% of global energy and one third of global greenhouse gas emissions. As well as being already significant in absolute and relative terms, emissions from the building sector are increasing. It is therefore vitally important that we take action in this area as a priority.

Work will encompass the built environment as a whole taking into consideration:

- How our towns and villages, buildings and communities, existing and new are constructed, located, powered, heated, function
- How resilient they are to the expected local impacts of climate change
- How they need to change in order to align with, and contribute towards, the aims of the strategy

The built environment interacts with other work streams (for instance energy usage of buildings under the 'Power' work stream, or 'Access' to active travel infrastructure and public transport under the Transport work stream). It is an area which the council, working as part of the CLLP Team, can exercise influence and control over new development through the Local Planning Policy.

There are also opportunities in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council to support future transport planning via locally specific transport strategies such as the Gainsborough Transport Strategy. It is currently under development and considers shared transport methods and encouraging modal shift. The unique position of the Council in terms of its prominent role in the community creates opportunities to act as an enabler to kick start and support wider regeneration initiatives as well as leading innovative projects on council-owned buildings.

The emerging CLLP review is a key document in this area which will identify priority themes and actions and opportunities to 'combat climate change' for the built environment. Climate change and the opportunities the Local Plan review presents to ensure a transition to zero carbon are currently being subjected to robust scrutiny. Existing planning policies support and encourage building development, which provides measures to combat carbon emissions. However they often do not go as far as to give decision makers a clear ability to refuse a development on climate or sustainability grounds, or place a mandatory obligation on developers to provide additional sustainability measures as part of a development.



It is important that the CLLP establishes planning policy requirements that fit into wider corporate initiatives across the three district councils concerned, West Lindsey District Council, City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council.

The council cannot work alone, we need help from the public to ensure our agreed approach complements our wider council(s) priorities whilst driving the move to net zero and combatting and adapting to climate change.

The council's Building Control service will contribute to achieving the outcomes. Building regulations encourage higher energy efficiency standards in new builds and refurbishments and it is highly likely over the coming years that these regulations will be overhauled to take these requirements further. The introduction of higher energy efficiency standards in building regulations, updates to the CLLP and requirements as drafted within the Environment Bill in relation to ecology and the environment will provide a clear framework to deliver outcomes against this 'Buildings' work stream. Additionally, recent government backed initiatives such as the Future Homes Standard and Green Homes Grant will also play a contributory role in this area.

We believe that there are two main themes for this work stream that can form part of our strategy: New Building Development and Existing Buildings and Communities.

The development of the CLLP Framework will help identify outcomes and key tasks, particularly for new building development.



This section looks at how we generate, store and consume power more smartly in terms of both heat and electricity. It considers how we can deliver greater levels of low carbon and renewable energy generation, store this energy so that it is available for use when we need it, improve our levels of energy security, reduce levels of fuel poverty, and improve energy efficiency across all aspects of society.

We will need to consider that we have made a commitment to achieving 100% clean energy across the council's full range of functions by 2040. We will be looking to do that much sooner as we seek to drive progress towards our zero carbon commitment. The council's main energy usages are identified in the CMP. The council does not have a large balance of assets when compared to other councils and those we have are new and energy efficient already and have been the subject of a renewable energy assessment.



Solar panels have been fitted to a number of our buildings and there is a significant income generation each year of more than £21,000 from the use of these panels on the Guildhall, West Lindsey Leisure Centre, Market Rasen Festival Hall and the Trinity Arts Centre. This demonstrates that green initiatives don't have to cost more and can generate cash and savings. We need to better understand their energy contribution and the contribution of energy that comes from other renewable sources through our existing green energy tariff.

Power interacts with other workstreams (energy efficiency of buildings under the Buildings workstream or proliferating Electric Vehicles (EVs) and reducing our fleet emissions under the Transport workstream). It is an area within which the council can potentially exercise a fair amount of influence and control, through planning, council procurement and operations, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others and developing renewable energy projects. We have identified three possible priority themes for 'Power' where we think we can deliver projects that will have most impact:

1. Reducing and Shifting Energy Demand

Reducing the amount of energy consumed to the lowest possible levels is an obvious means of reducing emissions. Initiatives to promote energy efficiency are common place and include, installing more energy efficient heating sources and appliances, the use of Smart meters and water saving techniques and the use of grey water. Across the council's operations, the CMP has identified a number of possible actions for the council to take. Action however is also required across the district with householders and businesses. Therefore the council must also actively encourage development that incorporates energy efficiency at the design stage and promote energy efficiency measures, campaigns and schemes that offer opportunities to reduce demand and usage.

2. Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Generation and Storage Technologies

The means by which energy is produced is a key consideration. The electricity grid is being decarbonised as less reliance on fossil fuels to produce energy gathers pace. This, coupled with the increase in generation of renewable energy in the form of wind, wave and solar power is a major advance in combatting emissions across the planet. As a council, we must keep abreast of developments and maximise and realise the potential for low carbon and renewable energy generation and storage, using our own assets and across the district, whilst taking account of major constraints to deployment such as the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB. The CLLP will be a major consideration in determining the scope for renewable energy production and storage across the District.

3. The Council's Own Estate and Operations

The council's CMP (2021-2026) sets out a series of actions for the Council to take to reduce its energy consumption. The aim will be to decarbonise direct and indirect emissions arising from the council's own operations as quickly and effectively as possible. It is acknowledged that the council will always require energy to carry out its operations, but taking action such as ensuring energy is obtained from renewable sources, switching the existing corporate fleet to EV/Hybrid/ULEV at the most appropriate points and promoting energy efficiency among staff and Members as part of the way in which we conduct our business, will have a positive impact on reducing the council's carbon footprint.



Campaigning and Lobbying

It is vital that the council's declaration to reach a net-zero carbon position across its operations by 2050 and to see that the whole district achieves the same position, leads to real action. Stakeholders will be monitoring and holding the council to account as it progresses its plans and actions. However, the council will need support and assistance from other organisations, councils and central government, as it may require legislative change, additional powers and resources to achieve success.

Over recent years, the council has dealt with a reduction in government grants and the loss of key specialist staff. Deregulation and changing government guidance have also had an adverse impact on the council's ability to address climate change as effectively as it would have liked.

Infrastructure developments in the district, such as the new build Lea Fields Crematorium and Market Rasen Leisure Centre, have primarily focused on the financial cost, with climate related matters taking a secondary role. Concerns remain related to on-going budgetary and proposed structural reforms therefore the need to campaign and lobby is paramount, so that the tools are provided for the council to achieve its goals.

It is important that the council leads from the front and represents the best interests of its communities and businesses to secure the resources and other changes required. The council must campaign, lobby and send a strong message to Westminster individually or collectively with other Lincolnshire Councils or with the local government community as a whole.

The Friends of the Earth identify a number of actions or support that the council should call for. In doing so the council must stress the positive benefits, set out below, that will ensue from success and help to bring about a genuine green recovery.

- Improved access to nature for all
- Tackling health inequalities such as fuel poverty and exposure to air pollution
- Creating jobs fit for the future and giving people the skills to do them
- Supporting resilient local low-carbon economies



1. Resourcing the low-carbon economy

Direct funding

The UK government will need to provide a proportion of the funds needed for a green recovery. For example, funds intended to boost economic recovery like the Shared Prosperity Fund and Industrial Strategy Challenge funds must be used to drive the transition to zero carbon. Councils hold key relationships with training institutions, businesses and communities, making them well placed to deliver both economic recovery and a joined-up response to the climate and ecological emergencies. National economic recovery schemes should include location-based funding to enable spending in places where the need is greatest.

Covid-19 has placed enormous financial burdens on national and local government. This makes it even more important to deliver a cost-effective response that also delivers on health. For example, supporting more active travel and better insulated homes.

Examples of direct-funding needs include:

- Low-carbon infrastructure – Friends of the Earth estimates that between £7 and £10 billion per year is needed to fund urban public transport and cycling across the UK. This can be raised by re-allocating transport budgets from climate “bads”, such as new roads, to climate “goods”.
- Skills – funding low-carbon skills development (including via the National Skills Fund and National Retraining Scheme) enables councils to align training with local low-carbon employment opportunities, like housing retrofits and heat-pump installation.

Increase powers to raise money

It would also be possible to raise more funds locally if councils were granted new powers to raise money themselves. For example, the law should be changed so that local authorities can raise a significant proportion of funding for urban public transport from businesses through a local public transport payroll levy, as is widely used in France.

Enable local authorities to charge a parking levy

With many large retailers and leisure facilities out of town and poorly served by public transport, a levy on these businesses could fund public transport provision and segregated cycleways connected to them. This scheme would be similar to the workplace parking levy successfully deployed by Nottingham City Council to fund urban public transport.



2. Better buildings

Instead of an obsession with ‘build build build’, the government must ensure that councils have the powers and resources to scale up retrofitting existing housing, to end fuel poverty and cut emissions.

Making grants available to individual householders will help, but councils have a key role in retrofitting social housing and facilitating it in private housing and commercial buildings, while securing high energy-efficiency standards in the public estate, including schools. Where new building is needed, it’s essential that councils have the power through the planning system to insist on zero-carbon development, and to involve their local communities in shaping their areas. Legally, Local Plans must set out how planning will mitigate and adapt to climate change, which will be hard to achieve unless councils have the powers to deliver. But recent planning reform proposals from the government threaten to remove much of councils’ control over new development.

Reform planning policy to support zero-carbon buildings and places

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains helpful pointers but needs significant strengthening to enable councils to achieve the radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that are needed. For example, by:

- Requiring all new homes and other buildings to be zero carbon by 2025.
- Requiring that suitable areas for renewable and low-carbon energy sources are identified and allocated in Local Plans.
- Ensuring that new development is located near to new or existing high-quality public transport and services.

- Requiring that development plans and planning policies set out measures needed to achieve zero-carbon developments and communities.
- Prioritising protection and enhancement of green space.
- Minimising life-cycle carbon emissions in demolition, construction, materials, and use by advocating circular economy principles for developments.
- Requiring new development to be resilient to extreme weather events.

Empower councils to introduce higher energy-efficiency standards for new buildings

Building regulations must also be used to ensure that all new buildings are net zero. The new Future Homes Standard should set high standards that all developments should meet as a minimum. But this should not preclude local planning authorities setting their own ambitious standards to go further. This approach would avoid the need for costly retrofits of homes built under future standards.

Ensure councils and communities can require high housing standards

Permitted development rights remove a council’s control over new development and exclude local communities’ voices, so shouldn’t be used for new housing. An example is allowing buildings to be converted to residential use without needing planning permission. This has allowed the development of sub-standard properties poorly serviced by public transport and distant from amenities. Despite this, the government wants to extend these rights to more buildings. Permitted development should only be used for very minor developments, such as building a garden shed, fitting solar panels or installing heat pumps.

Put local authorities centre-stage when transforming heating and energy efficiency

Councils should be required and empowered to produce a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (as is being piloted in Scotland). As part of this, they should be given the responsibility and resources to coordinate an area-by-area energy-efficiency and eco-heating transformation programme.

Improve standards in the private rented sector and empower local authorities to ensure compliance

The government can take measures to speed up the retrofitting of existing buildings to a high standard of energy efficiency. As well as cutting emissions, retrofitting will help to end fuel poverty and improve the health of people living in badly insulated homes. Cold homes have health impacts that cost the NHS an estimated £2.5 billion each year. Good examples of retrofit systems include Energiesprong and Passivhaus, which deliver cost-effective solutions. To ensure that levels of energy efficiency are raised, the government should increase the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard in the private rented sector – setting homes on the path to a minimum energy performance certificate (EPC) band C by 2030. Interim steps should also be set out – Scotland has a minimum of EPC band D by 2022, for example.

The maximum spending threshold for landlords should also be increased and should be able to be offset through reintroduction of the Landlord's Energy Saving Allowance. The standards should also apply to houses of multiple occupation and the social rented sector. Local authorities also have a key role in ensuring compliance, which they will be able to perform much better if they have dedicated funding and high-quality data.

Enable public sector retrofitting

Councils need a package of resourcing to enable them to bring all public sector buildings to a minimum of EPC band "C" by 2030, with social housing as a priority. This should be done through whole-house retrofits with immediate short-term support to reduce fuel poverty rates. The government's promise of a fund of £2.9 billion for improving energy efficiency in schools and hospitals must also be fulfilled.



3. Sustainable transport

Support councils to increase cycling, walking and home working

Cycling provision in the UK is decades behind what it is in other parts of Europe. For example, two-thirds of journeys in Amsterdam are by walking and cycling, whereas in UK cities it's typically less than a third.

Cycling and walking bring significant health benefits as well as reduced carbon and local air pollution. Local authorities need support with expertise, as well as encouragement when they face challenges. The government can support councils by establishing a dedicated funding stream at levels seen in countries like the Netherlands. It can ensure it's straightforward to permanently reallocate road space to pedestrians and cyclists following the increase in active transport during Covid-19 travel restrictions. Cargo bike demonstration projects could also show how freight in urban areas can be shifted from vans to e-bikes.

Enable the regulation of bus services and better coordination

Power should be devolved to local authorities, combined local authorities or transport bodies with responsibility for buses, so that they can re-regulate bus services. This would enable them to ensure a comprehensive network of frequent, reliable and affordable buses with a single ticketing system. This should include devolution of bus service operators' grants so they can be targeted at low-carbon vehicles. Also, local authorities that wish to establish a municipal public transport operator should be allowed to do so, to better coordinate public transport networks and ticketing.

4. Renewable energy

Empower local authorities to support the transition to low-carbon energy

The government should make clear that planning authorities should reject applications for fossil-fuel extraction on climate-change grounds. National planning policy needs to be more supportive of renewable energy, to facilitate the increase in supply that's needed. Planning policy should actively encourage new onshore wind developments in England, removing the current barriers in the NPPF.

In addition, as stated above, new development should be required to achieve net-zero carbon. This should include the installation of renewables within new developments, like heat pumps, solar power or micro-wind. It should be clear that appropriate development of renewable energy schemes should be supported in the green belt and AONB, if they do not conflict with the purposes of these areas.



5. Reducing waste

Waste management is only responsible for 4% of UK greenhouse gas emissions. However, the extraction and processing of natural resources to make the products we buy produces large amounts of greenhouse gases and has other negative impacts.

The amount of clothes thrown away is a huge challenge to councils, with around 300,000 tonnes of textile waste ending up in household bins every year, which is then sent to landfill or incinerators. But well before that, the manufacture of consumer goods leads to high carbon emissions, and other problems, such as using large quantities of water, often outside of the UK. More sustainable consumption needs to be encouraged.

Similarly, the problem with plastic pollution needs to be dealt with by cutting the amount of plastic that is used, rather than treating it as a recycling problem for councils to deal with.

Support waste reduction

Phasing out all non-essential single-use products would help reduce pressure on council systems and cut impacts caused in the supply chain.

The government must deliver on its commitment to introducing full cost-recovery for products that end up in household waste. This should mean that funding of recycling and waste services shifts from councils, and therefore taxpayers, to product manufacturers and retailers. More funding needs to be made available to councils for the collection of food waste.

Support sustainable consumption and production

Encouraging people to eat less and better meat and dairy products will not only cut UK emissions but will play a crucial role in cutting our impacts overseas. Cutting down on meat and dairy is also healthier.

The government has a role in enabling behavioural change, for example by supporting councils to introduce more plant-based menu options – in line with the Eatwell Guide – in schools, hospitals, care homes and prisons, including through guidance on standards.



6. Restoring nature

Protecting nature sites and creating more nature-rich green spaces is essential to our own wellbeing as well as addressing the ecological crisis. Increasing the amount of green and blue infrastructure (like ponds) in our towns and cities also plays an important role in sequestering carbon and in helping places adapt to a changing climate, for example by reducing flood risk.

Help councils double tree cover

The government should increase funding to councils for tree planting and maintenance, including large-scale woodland and re-wilding programmes in appropriate locations.

Boost natural flood defences

The importance of green and blue infrastructure (including green spaces, green roofs, gardens, rivers, wetlands and ponds) should be recognised in the grant-in-aid formula for flood defence funding.

Ensure everyone has access to natural green space

Through planning policy and funding for parks services, the government should help councils to ensure that everyone has access to good quality nature-rich green space within five minutes of home. This will include new green space in new developments, and targeted creation of space for nature in areas that are currently deprived of it. Creating pocket parks should be a part of this aim, including reallocating space from roads and parking places.

In summary, the council endorses the work of the Friends of the Earth and recognises the need for action to be taken along the lines they outline. Additional powers and resources are urgently required to enable and empower all councils to address the climate and ecological crises and campaigning for this to materialise is a key role for the council. The response to Covid-19 shows how local authorities can respond effectively to a crisis. A joined-up approach is the only sensible way to respond to the recovery from Covid-19, by ensuring that the actions taken deliver more healthy communities and a healthy environment more resilient to future challenges.



Resources and Financing

Our CMP will detail an overall model for carbon management in the district to carry us towards our goal – currently set as net zero emissions from our operations before 2050. The programme will be presented to full council in May 2021.

All projects identified as part of this programme will be costed, but they will still need to go through the council's approval process, meeting project management controls and receiving expenditure approval in accordance with the budget setting process. The council will position itself to take advantage of external grants and financial incentives, but it must be noted that these corporate controls are required regardless of eventual funding streams as the council needs to ensure value for money is achieved.

In line with the request from council in November 2019, a new decision making framework will be presented for approval which will ensure that carbon budgeting is considered in all reports that come to future committees. Alongside existing financial evaluation, this is expected to introduce an element of 'cost per carbon saving' into larger scale projects, and consider this impact against avoided spend that will be necessary in future to meet our own CO2 emissions targets and likely regulatory obligations. The principle is that this will bring a new focus and allow projects with deferred future benefits to proceed. These include those that might be considered more marginal when viewed through the lens of traditional cost benefit analysis.

Some schemes identified in the new CMP are likely to include projects that should proceed immediately on their own merits and are not dependent upon the approval of the overall programme. This is where it can be demonstrated that there is a straightforward business case with strategic benefits and financial payback in an acceptable

timescale. Approval and funding for such schemes have already been agreed in many cases. Where they are identified and approved, they will be added to and detailed in the council's MTFP.

The council does have access to several potential funding streams and the choice of most appropriate funding will depend upon the achievement of value for money. This will be assessed following the completion of a relevant business cases for individual projects. External funding will always be considered before the use of internal council funds, but consideration should be given to how we can ensure we are aware, and best able to take advantage of opportunities. East Midlands Network has a dedicated team that is available to help facilitate and maximise the funds available to the councils in the region. Groups like the LEP, Greater Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Network (GLEEN), and Lincolnshire Sustainability Officers Group can be valuable sources and knowledge, information and support as well as potential partners in joint schemes. We should continue to forge contacts and partnerships in these areas to best ensure that we can be on the front foot when strategic opportunities arise.



Some of the ways the council may decide to fund the projects associated with the CMP are:

Invest to Save

The council's capital programme contains funding for Invest to Save schemes. This budget is included on the basis that any projects funded from it will deliver savings to the council. Examples include projects that deliver energy efficiency savings and avoid future expenditure on gas and electricity. Previously, installing solar panels on council buildings was done through a revolving carbon management fund and the projects have now paid back and are still generating income of more than £21k per annum for the council through the Government renewables feed-in-tariff (FIT) scheme. This is in addition to the avoided cost of energy spend.

Business cases for future proposals will likely be required to demonstrate how the cost of borrowing will be covered and show how the individual scheme is self-financing and so has no overall impact against the council's financial position. Schemes should also be considered that maintain the medium term financial position (i.e. neither improve nor worsen the position), but contribute towards delivery of service improvements, or contribute to achievement of council priorities.

Grants and Loans

Some projects may be applicable for external funding, where the terms of the grant are complementary to the outcomes contained within the CMP. External funding may be sought from existing grants or other climate change/energy efficiency related funds which are created as a result of the Climate Change Act to help encourage the transition to a low carbon economy. One such source is Salix, an

independent social enterprise with public funding from the UK Government.

Match-Funding

Some grant awarding bodies, and other third-party funders might attach a condition that a proportion of funding of the total costs of a project comes from the council.

Internal Resources

This includes borrowing for capital schemes and the possible use of the council's capital reserves.

Salix Finance

The Council has previously taken advantage of funding from Salix Finance. Salix financing facilitates carbon reduction and provides loans for a proportion of the investment necessary for energy efficiency technologies to be implemented in the sector.

They offer two funding options:

Option 1: Recycling Fund

A recycling fund, whereby a public sector body is awarded a match funded, interest free loan to fund a number of projects. The financial savings through each project are recycled to fund more projects, always maintaining the value of the fund at a constant level. Funding is returned to Salix only when no further suitable projects can be identified.

Option 2: Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme (SEELS)

The second option allows public sector bodies to apply for an interest free loan to finance up to 100% of a project, however these loans are targeted at specific projects, which when completed repay their costs to Salix from the financial savings achieved. Repayments are required every six months over a period of five years. Before such funding is applied for, the council must ensure that Salix's strict criteria are met. Therefore, it is not until the projects have been further defined and specific business cases formed that a full evaluation and review of appropriate funding can be undertaken.

Crowdfunding

This is a process by which people provide money to projects, companies or organisations via a website (platform). Depending on the nature of the financial arrangement, people receive a return that is either financial (investment-based) or non-financial (donation-based). Research suggests that investment-based crowdfunding offers the potential to deliver a competitive new model of finance for the public sector, while also providing a new way to engage and communicate with residents in a way that builds new local networks of trust. To date a small number of local authorities have successfully funded carbon reductions schemes via this method. It is an initiative therefore that the council should investigate further to understand its suitability and potential and to also determine the governance related matters that must be considered.



Vulnerable Communities

Climate change is something which effects everyone in West Lindsey to some degree and should not be viewed as an issue which is defined by geography, class or age. Our ambition is to ensure that all of West Lindsey's residents are protected from the impact of climate change, but that equality impact assessments are undertaken on specific projects to ensure that any changes that are made do not have a negative impact on the district's most vulnerable people and communities. The transition to zero carbon must also be a just one which ensures that the social impacts of changes to heating and energy for example, are considered alongside the environmental impact.

Within the context of this strategy, we refer to vulnerable communities in the sense of those at risk of the adverse impacts of climate change. Hence with regard to West Lindsey, we are referring to homes, communities and businesses that are at risk of flooding, travel disruption, potential poor water and air quality issues and also those that experience fuel poverty or poor energy efficiency due to poor quality housing and/or living off grid. The council is well placed to play a key role at a local level in responding to the growing public concerns about the environment and issues such as climate change.

Recent extreme weather events have resulted in flooding and traffic disruption that has affected communities across the district. Climate projections predict more intense and variable rainfall patterns, leading to more flooding, water quality issues and extremes of temperature. This will greatly affect all of us, but research suggests older people and those on lower incomes will suffer the most. Also, habitats and species that are already under threat may suffer further threats to their existence or be lost completely.

However, to assist those communities at risk we must first be able to identify them and perhaps also ensure that they regard themselves as

vulnerable in the context of climate change. This is vitally important, so as to be positioned to address the prevailing issues these communities face, the council will need the support and involvement of the communities themselves. We recognise that the council cannot provide all of the solutions, as combating climate change needs system-wide change that involves communities, businesses, individuals and stakeholders across all sectors of the economy, across the country and the wider world. The scale and pace of change needed will require major investments, changes to the way in which we use and interact with energy and changes to how we live our lives and define success. It will also redefine how we manage and interact with our environment. Above all, it will involve collective leadership and shared ambition to deal with this challenge head on and to ultimately realise and enjoy the benefits that will accrue.

To effectively support our vulnerable communities, two over-riding factors will need to be considered; adaptation and resilience.



By adaptation we refer to the need to anticipate the adverse effects of climate change and take appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage they can cause, or by taking advantage of opportunities that may arise. It has been shown that well planned, early adaptation action saves money and lives later. Examples of adaptation measures include: using scarce water resources more efficiently; adapting building codes to future climate conditions and extreme weather events; building flood defences and raising the levels of dykes; developing drought-tolerant crops; choosing tree species and forestry practices less vulnerable to storms and fires and setting aside land corridors to help species migrate. Much of this work lies outside of the direct remit of the council. Therefore, building close working relationships with partner agencies and identifying mutually compatible outcomes will be a pre-requisite for success.

Building greater resilience within vulnerable communities is also a key factor. There is no clear definition of what this means but the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, having reviewed a wide range of literature, summarise the concept as broadly encompassing the ability of communities to reduce exposure to, prepare for, cope with, better recover from, adapt and transform as needed to, the direct and indirect effects of climate change, where these effects can be both shocks and stresses.

The council must work at a local level through ward plans and neighbourhoods to adapt to make communities more resilient to climate change. This will form part of the council's work through on-going support for the development of Neighbourhood Plans and also through the development of improved communications, information, sign posting and guidance. Implementing strategies and interventions that will improve the capacity and resilience of vulnerable communities and the district overall is vital. In doing this, residents are likely to expect to be involved in the policy process throughout. Community

engagement will facilitate a greater understanding and ownership of actions on climate change. The credibility and legitimacy of our elected members may mean that they are well placed to help the council to understand complex local need and be at the forefront of this agenda.

Specific actions the council could consider to increase resilience include, ensuring that the CLLP places climate change at its core and reflects the need for adaptation and resilience to be incorporated into all development and infrastructure planning; working with developers to ensure new housing development meets higher standards and is sustainable, more resilient to the effects of climate change and achieves net-zero carbon emissions; further address fuel poverty issues across the district by supporting a district heating scheme and supporting communities to take energy efficiency measures to improve insulation and glazing; ensure that emergency planning protocols are continually monitored and assessed for effectiveness, particularly in respect of flood risk; understanding the effects of demographic change on our communities and the impact this may have on their existing resilience levels; increasing the resilience of natural habitats and species by acting as a responsible custodian of the natural environment that the council both owns and has an influence over – trees, parks, open spaces and larger tracts of land and working effectively with partners to promote climate action in these areas. Over-riding all of these potential actions is perhaps the most significant; the council can empower and support local groups to develop community-scale climate change projects and can partner with the community through co-production in adaptation and resilience planning. By incorporating community expertise at the design stage, it will address the unique ways that different communities are vulnerable and will increase the capacity of planning processes to be more adaptive to local conditions and vulnerabilities.

Reducing Waste

The waste workstream looks at the waste produced across the district and considers how best to improve management within the waste hierarchy of refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle, recover. It explores how we can build the value of certain waste materials to develop a more circular economy and how we can use our position of community leadership to change habits and practices within our communities.

Waste interacts with other work streams (building a more circular economy and engaging with businesses over their waste management under the 'Influencing' workstream or requiring best practice waste management in new developments under the 'Buildings' workstream).

It is an area within which the council has a good level of influence and control through statutory waste responsibilities, membership of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP), our own council operations, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others.

The developing Lincolnshire Waste Strategy is the key document for us that identifies priority themes for waste and the council will support and work hard to deliver collective outcomes that all partners have agreed upon.

We have highlighted three key areas below where we will strive to go beyond the LWP strategy. They are:

- Reducing residential waste and improving the quality and quantity of recycling through a Behaviour Change programme
- Commercial Waste and the Circular Economy
- Waste from our own buildings and activities

1. Residential Waste and Behaviour Change

Within this, the intention is to ensure that the council continues to support the direction of the LWP and the high level ambitions identified through the LWP strategy, including improving our already very good levels of domestic waste recycling, reducing domestic food waste and diverting residual waste to generate energy wherever possible. Additionally it is important that forthcoming changes in recycling to improve the quality of materials are effectively communicated and that our residents understand why they are required and support them. It is also essential that the council ensures new development fosters sustainable waste management behaviours.



2. Commercial Waste and the Circular Economy Objectives

Working with commercial enterprises across the district is a requisite to ensure they are more aware of the impacts of their commercial waste and are working to reduce waste and improve recycling rates. This would facilitate considerable improvements in the level of commercial waste recycled and reused across the district and ensure significant steps are made towards the development of a circular economy across the district/county/region.



3. Waste from Council Buildings and Activities

Leading by example is a major task for the council and runs through many of the themes within this Strategy. It is no different in respect of waste. Therefore waste from council operations must be effectively reduced and all remaining waste should be appropriately redirected to reuse, recycling or energy production. Single-use items should be removed from council operations by as early a date as reasonably possible and the council must ensure that it leads by example as a role model for other local authorities and local businesses



Influencing Others

The council only has direct control over a small percentage of emissions across the district (our direct emissions). It is therefore important that the council works with and influences others to also play their full part in responding to the climate emergency. This will be vital in the wider district achieving its zero carbon ambitions. We will work with and exert our influence on as many organisations and individuals as possible in the way services are designed, delivered and communicated and create opportunities to encourage and support partners and residents to play a key role in achieving the district's climate change objectives. Different measures can support and influence different groups of stakeholders – residents and customers, visitors to the district, businesses in the supply chain, partner organisations in whose operations the council has an interest, neighbouring authorities across Lincolnshire and beyond, the Government and international interests.

To achieve the goals the council has set to be net-zero carbon by 2050 and to support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire area net-zero carbon within the same timescale, it is clear that this will require collaborative working. As a 'leader of place', the council is in a privileged position to bring together all relevant bodies from across the district and demonstrate, by example, the importance and benefits of taking action to combat climate change. The council already possesses a number of policy levers and funding powers that can be used to influence behaviour. This influence is far greater than the council's actual direct emissions from its operations as an organisation, however the use of such powers and policies must be carefully considered so that communities feel jointly involved, understand and appreciate the benefits of taking action and do not perceive any coercive intentions.

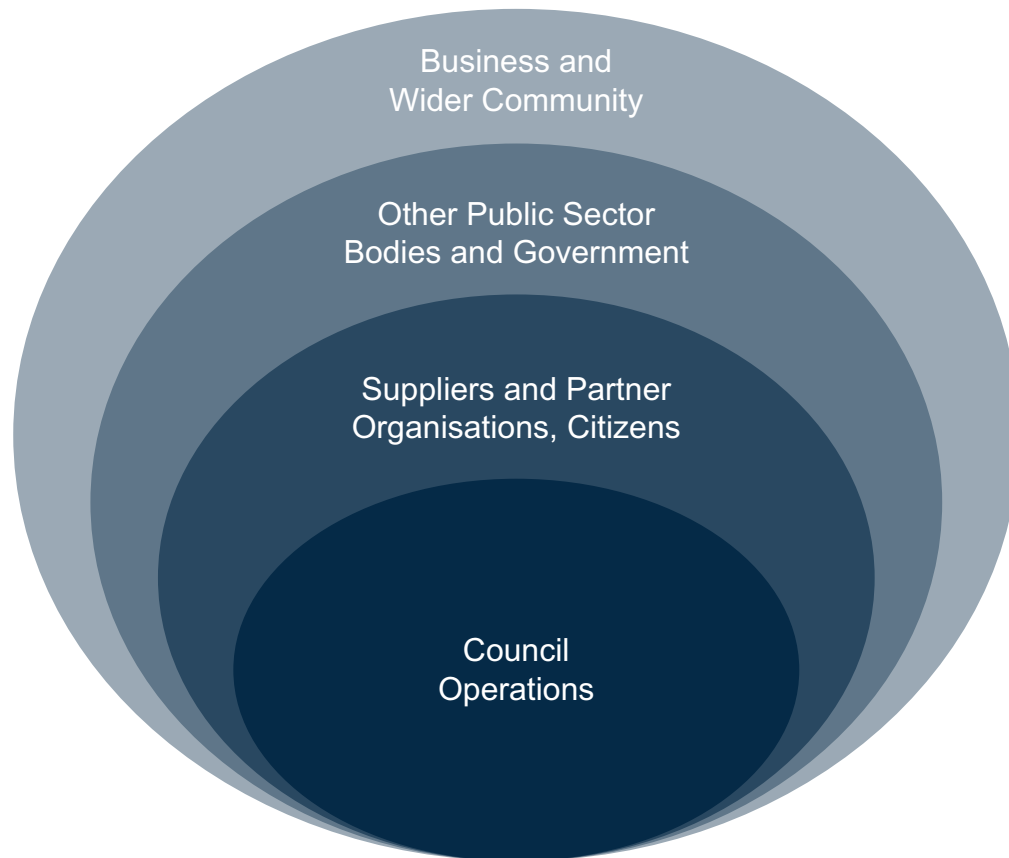
This aspect of the strategy is perhaps the most crucial and important to execute appropriately so that the goal for the council and wider

district to achieve a net-zero carbon position by 2050 is achieved. Throughout this document, reference is made to the term 'sphere of influence'. By this we mean the council must have a clear understanding of what it can control, what it can influence and what it cannot influence at any particular point in time. This understanding is critical to enable the council adopt relevant strategies to ensure it exerts as much influence as possible across all sectors operating within the district.

Depicted diagrammatically demonstrates more easily that the further the council moves from its own operations, its ability to control and influence lessens. Hence to exert influence and control internally, the council has a great degree of autonomy. It can also exert a significant degree of influence and control over partner organisations, suppliers and citizens. However, the council's degree of influence weakens when related to attempting to influence other public sector bodies and/or Government and weakens further still in respect of influencing business and industry. It is vital therefore that the council identifies the key stakeholders within each of these sectors and understands the depth of its current relationship with each of them.

In generic terms the council already possesses a number of policy-making and regulatory functions. Many of these already help to incentivise and encourage low carbon behaviours and activities. In order for the council and the district to meet the targets that have been set we will need to ensure that all key decisions the council makes and policies and procedures we implement support this ambition. This will include grant, funding and investment decisions, procurement and commissioning, our capital and revenue gateway process, new build and refurbishment standards, design standards, leases or developments on council owned land, the CLLP and staff and member travel policy. These also provide the opportunity to influence how other large and small organisations in the district and

beyond operate and to encourage them to work towards the zero-carbon target.



As a council, we recognise that we can and must influence within and across the organisation among both staff and councillors to turn into action the message that a dramatic reduction in emissions is required and that such action must be taken on an individual, household, community and organisational level. To assist with this the council has already taken action and influenced change in the form of:

- Holding awareness and training sessions on the subject matter
- Supporting home working policies
- Becoming a 'paper-light' organisation
- Making greater use of virtual meetings/tele-conferencing
- Implementing two CMP's and producing the third iteration
- Procuring fleet vehicles that are the most fuel efficient and produce low emissions
- Created a cross-party Member Working Group

However, there is more that the council can do. The updated version of the CMP 2021-2016 identifies further measures the council can take to reduce its carbon footprint along with a roadmap for delivery. To make progress against the roadmap, the council must be able to persuade decision-makers that the action(s) to be taken are proportionate, will be effective and sustainable but also provide value for money. Building confidence throughout the delivery of the roadmap is key to keeping all internal parties engaged and encouraged that progress is being made and will provide the basis for on-going external communications which highlight success, promote future plans and encourage other organisations to follow suit.

A further positive action that can be taken is referenced within the decision-making section of the strategy but further mention here illustrates the cross-cutting nature of the work. It is vital that to be able to exert influence, decisions made by the council must reference and take account of the climate related impacts and opportunities of any key projects/initiatives the council is considering. By consistently highlighting and referencing such considerations across the council's governance and decision making processes, the council can engineer changes in attitude, awareness and understanding of climate relates issues and consequently ensure that positive actions are taken.

The council's influencing role and duty then spreads further afield to work across the County of Lincolnshire to work with fellow councils to ensure that a collective, consistent and mutually beneficial approach is taken to face the challenges all neighbouring authorities face. Again some good work has already been instigated to support this in the formation of a Lincolnshire-wide Sustainability Officer Group in which West Lindsey plays a key role. The on-going sharing of best practice and initiatives, working collaboratively where possible will be a key feature of the council's work.

Moving further away from the local authority domain, the council must simultaneously attempt to engage and work across the district with businesses, industry, 3rd sector organisations and other interest groups. Among this wider group the council may have less direct influence and therefore it is vitally important to stress the positive benefits of taking action as well as highlighting and explaining the reasons why urgent and sustained action is required. Leading by example, supporting and pin-pointing organisations to relevant advice and third party support and funding streams will be a key requirement. The council will also need to formally engage with organisations across the district. Hence, the creation of a cross-district Climate Board could be an appropriate vehicle to bring together vested interests and form collaborations and joint projects designed so that the district as a whole can achieve net-zero carbon by 2050.

Running through all of the influencing work the council must engage with is the key matter of continually communicating, supporting and encouraging our residents to try and do the right thing by the environment. We have made a positive start with this by creating new climate related web pages and consulting widely during the development of the strategy. However, we must not allow complacency to set in. Therefore we are committed to regularly

reporting openly on the progress the council makes and the problems it faces in achieving its objectives, highlighting positive actions that residents can take for themselves, promoting the positive benefits that can accrue both personally and environmentally and crucially engage with the younger generation in a meaningful manner. The creation of public forums or assemblies could be a means of achieving this whereby the council places itself to be held to account for its actions and engages with interested stakeholders in a structured manner.

The use and promotion of trusted, verifiable research data will also help the council to influence across all sectors. By referencing and highlighting relevant climate related information that can be relied upon, the council can be regarded as a trusted third party and leader on climate, environment and sustainability matters. Consequently the council will keep abreast of developments across this agenda, attending relevant conferences and workshops to gain further knowledge and insight and will also regularly issue communications messages across all platforms to reach as many stakeholders as possible across the district and further afield.

So all aspects of the work the council must do to positively influence are vitally important to help the council reduce the impact of its operations to carbon net zero position by 2050 and to also support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire area zero carbon within the same timescale, so that West Lindsey is a great place to be where people, business and communities can thrive and reach their potential.

Green Transport

In the UK, around 40% of all emissions at present are caused by transport. West Lindsey is a district of 445 square kilometres that is divided by the A15 and traversed by the A46. We have a geography that makes many reliant on cars. It is no surprise then that in our district, transport emissions make up an even higher proportion of total emissions, at 43%.

Whilst the Covid-19 lockdown led to a significant reduction in vehicles on our roads and associated emissions, national data shows that they have rebounded quickly and it seems clear that, at least in the foreseeable future, emissions must be reduced through a move to vehicles powered by alternative low-carbon fuels. That will require action by the Government and support from local councils to promote suitable infrastructure and charging networks.



The UK Government is now poised to bring forward its ban on new fossil fuel vehicles from 2040 to 2030 to help speed up the rollout of

electric vehicles. The Government's ambitions are that it will end the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by this date. By then, it is expected that the majority of new cars and vans sold will be 100% zero emission and all newer cars and vans to have significant zero emission capability. By 2040 almost every car and van will be zero emission. This is in line with recommendations from Committee on Climate Change (CCC), which in its 2019 report, argued that 2040 is too late for the phase-out of petrol and diesel cars and vans, and current plans for delivering this are too vague. The CCC has also concluded that a switch to electric vehicles by 2030 would produce a cost saving over a 2040, or even a 2035 date.

Whilst we believe the Government must take heed of its CCC's warning and set a more ambitious target date, it appears that ending the sales of all petrol and diesel vehicles much before 2030, as many advocate, would be difficult to achieve. It will take time for manufacturers to convert their production lines to e-vehicles and petrol and diesel will therefore be the norm for new vehicles for several years to come, and those buying them will expect them to have a life of at least 10 years. Moreover, we cannot expect such a transition until batteries have been developed that can vastly increase the distances vehicles can travel on a single charge, until there is technology for much faster charging, until the cost of e-vehicles can be substantially reduced, until there is adequate provision of charging points and until service stations can make the necessary changes. This is happening, but at a slow pace.

In respect of the council, it has few cars and vans compared to most councils; with only six light commercial vans and one car. We are already proposing to reduce this number to three and replace with electric vehicles as current ones come to the end of their working life. However, the majority of our fleet and emissions are made up of our refuse collection fleet and street cleansing vehicles. Due to the

distances covered each day and sheer volume of work undertaken, our hopes for emission reductions lie mainly with the use of alternative fuels (hydrogen being a possibility). But, as with cars, much development work will be needed before major changes are possible. We therefore, regrettably, do not expect transport emissions to drop much in the near term. Beyond 2030, we hope that the ban on petrol and diesel vehicle sales (or the anticipation of its introduction) will result in significant reductions in the following decade, but achieving near zero emissions by even 2040 will present a major challenge.

Our strategy for reducing transport emissions therefore will reflect what we believe are the realities of the time needed for making a transition. Reducing journeys made by cars and freight must be an absolute priority, but alongside that, the council has its part to play in ensuring that the change to e-powered or low-carbon vehicles is not inhibited by a shortage of charging points; either publicly available or incorporated into new development plans.

As a council we are also conscious of the impact our operations have on transport levels. Staff and members commute to work and undertake business mileage in the course of their jobs and roles. Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, many colleagues have worked from home/remotely, thereby significantly reducing the level of commuting mileage, while business mileage has also reduced. As recovery from the pandemic begins to take shape, the council is looking to harness the benefits brought about over the recent period, not only in less mileage accrued, but also in enhancing the work-life balance for many staff and increasing productivity. The way in which the council operates in the future is likely to be somewhat different to the past, but by reviewing travel related policies through a new lens and applying innovative thinking, the benefits will be multiple.

Additionally, encouraging a switch away from cars to public transport, walking and cycling is required. In a rural setting this is problematic as public transport services often do not meet need and the roads may not be conducive to safe cycling or walking. However, the council must work with partners including LCC and also lobby for improvements to the public transport and roads network to provide feasible alternatives for residents which enable them to go about their daily lives without the need for significant own vehicle usage. The co-benefits are obvious, improvements to health and wellbeing, less traffic and pollution and more connected communities.



Conclusion

Monitoring and Review

The council will set up a monitoring and review process to assess progress against the CO2e emission projections and other targets. This could be done on an annual basis through the councils Progress and Delivery reporting mechanism or, to align with the Committee on Climate Change's national carbon budgets, be split into 5-year periods.

Quarterly - Monitor progress against the Carbon Neutral Plan Report to Members and partners

Annually - Report progress to internal and external audiences Monitor renewable energy generation and installed capacity Monitoring of the cost benefits achieved (for instance, by estimating the energy savings that are achieved and the costs avoided as a result). In addition to reporting on the steps taken to achieve specific actions, the priorities of this Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis. This review will account for broader factors such as policy or technological changes; where appropriate, the action plan will be updated to reflect such changes.

Action Plan

The measures and actions described in this Strategy and Action Plan reflect the following overarching priorities:

The council should take a leadership role in reducing CO2e emissions by examining its own operations, buildings, vehicle fleet, services and policies and identifying best practice measures that can be implemented. The council should also take a leading role in engaging and collaborating with residents, businesses, Lincolnshire Councils, Parish and Town Councils and other stakeholders across the district to

support, facilitate, encourage and deliver CO2e emissions across the district.

The council should campaign and lobby the Government to achieve more rapid and deeper carbon reductions across key priority areas, including higher energy efficiency standards for new and existing buildings, policies that support uptake of renewable and low carbon technologies and the development of low carbon transport and infrastructure, including an uptake in the installation of EV charging points. This recognises that some of the actions laid out in the action plan will rely on broader trends that are outside of the Council's immediate control.

Final Thoughts

Through engagement and consultation undertaken in developing the aims of this Strategy, the council has established that it has the support of key stakeholders across the district; residents, businesses, Parish/Town councils alike.

The analysis which has led to the development of the action plan shows that the route towards becoming carbon neutral will require a strong level of ambition and commitment, backed up by significant interventions and investment across the council. Although the Strategy illustrates that meeting the carbon neutral ambition will rely upon some factors outside of the council's control, such as the decarbonisation of the grid and availability of key technology, the fundamental steps required to deliver the net-zero target are clear and with strong leadership from the council these can be set into action now.

You can now have your say on WLDC's plans

Head to our website, www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/climate,
where you can find out about WLDC's work
and view key documents and research.

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